

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Status and Amendment to Claims

Claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-18, and 21-27 are now pending. Claims 4 and 12 had been cancelled by previous amendments. Claims 19-220 have been cancelled by this amendment, without prejudice.

The Examiner is thanked for his kind allowance of claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-18, and 21-27.

The 35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Brown et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,365,657). The rejected claims 9 and 21 have been cancelled, without prejudice. With this amendment, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Request for Allowance

It is believed that this Amendment places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Amendment is earnestly solicited.

Request for Entry of Amendment


Entry of this Amendment will place the Application either in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment is appropriate and is respectfully requested.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,
THELEN REID & PRIEST, LLP

Dated: December 29, 2003


Masako Ando
Limited Recognition under 37 CFR §10.9(b)

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